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Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-second session

Draft report

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Addendum

Coordination questions: United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

(*Item 5 (b)*)

1. At its 7th and 8th meetings, on 13 June 2002, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa in the context of the Final Evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (E/AC.51/2002/8).

2. The Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries introduced the report and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of it.

Discussion

3. Appreciation was expressed for the report on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, which was considered to be frank and comprehensive.

4. There was general acknowledgement that after five years of the Special Initiative as the implementing arm of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, its task was done. Its performance was mixed, falling short of the expected goals. This was due in part to the fact that it was

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conceived on too large a scale; it was an initiative tailored for Africa but designed by others; and it lacked sufficient resources to bring it to fruition. In addition, the lack of effective teamwork among those entrusted with the management of the Special Initiative also led to its poor performance.

5. Nonetheless, there was broad agreement that while the Special Initiative had fallen short in its performance, the experience had provided useful lessons for the future coordination of the United Nations system. The New Partnership for Africa's Development was hailed as an African-designed initiative, which has many prospects for success. It was further stated that as an African initiative, the responsibility for its implementation should rest with African countries, with the United Nations system playing a supporting role alongside other donors. Some delegations expressed the view that priority should be given to HIV/AIDS in the implementation of the Partnership. Emphasis should be placed on building African capacity.

6. Questions were raised about the nature of the interface of the United Nations system with the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It was felt that it was imperative that all United Nations agencies collaborate and pool their diverse and immense expertise in supporting the Partnership. In this respect, the need to develop a strategic operational framework to guide United Nations intervention with respect to the Partnership was stressed. It was also noted that the Partnership would be a useful mechanism for coordinating United Nations development work for Africa and for achieving the objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration related to meeting the special needs of Africa.

7. It was acknowledged that the various trade and aid initiatives of several donors, including China, Japan, the United States of America and the European Union, needed to be dovetailed in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. There was a need for bilateral donors to be engaged in the process and to support the initiative if it was to stand a chance of succeeding.

8. It was emphasized that the Committee for Programme and Coordination should play an important advocacy role, in addition to monitoring the support of the United Nations system for the Partnership. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for a large resource mobilization effort for the programme, given that the lack of resources was a key impediment to the success of the performance of the Special Initiative.

9. Attention was drawn to the need to identify the role of the relevant structures within the United Nations Secretariat, including the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Development Programme in support of the Partnership. A renewed and strengthened Office of the Special Coordinator was described as essential to that effort. Moreover, an appropriate intergovernmental mechanism was also needed to periodically monitor and review the support provided by the United Nations system for the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which would report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly with measures to be taken to enhance United Nations support for the Partnership.

10. In conclusion, it was explained that the United Nations system had established multi-layered links with the Partnership. ECA was the main interlocutor with the Heads of State Implementation Committee and the Steering Committee of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and it has assisted in drawing up indicators for economic and corporate governance. The Steering Committee has directly contacted various agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to solicit their assistance. Moreover, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the High-level Committee on Programmes discussed extensively modalities for United Nations system response to the Partnership. Lessons learned from the Special Initiative and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s would prove useful in tailoring the response to the Partnership. It is to be borne in mind that coordination was most effective at the country level, where Governments should take the lead.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. **The Committee emphasized that the development needs of Africa should remain a high priority on the agenda of the United Nations system.**

12. **The Committee emphasized the importance of applying the lessons learned from the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa to the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It was concluded that the Special Initiative had improved inter-agency coordination in Africa and that the thematic cluster arrangements had proved to be particularly useful in fostering inter-agency collaboration at the country and regional levels.**

13. **The Committee noted that the United Nations system, through CEB, had adopted a three-pronged policy towards the New Partnership for Africa's Development, emphasizing the need for the United Nations system to exercise restraint in launching new initiatives, to unite in supporting African-owned and Africa-led initiatives and to promote inter-agency coordination. The Committee stressed the important decisions to be taken by CEB on future United Nations support for programmes in Africa.**

14. **The Committee underlined the need for agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In this regard, the Committee recommended that the United Nations system articulate a strategic operational framework for supporting its implementation. It was recommended that the proposed framework highlight problems, set goals, determine the respective roles of organizations, indicate resource requirements and introduce performance indicators.**

15. **The Committee emphasized that it should accordingly be involved in monitoring whatever framework the agencies adopt to support the Partnership. It recommended that the Secretary-General be requested to report to the Committee at its forty-third session on the future engagement of the United Nations system with the Partnership.**